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induce proprietors to evade it by gifts or other alienations in life. The question naturally arises, "Will not this be done, if the tax is of any real account?" In socialistic legislation to fix the length of the working day, or to fix a minimum wage or an average wage, the author finds little or no promise of help to laborers. He is more sanguine of the benefits to result from State ownership of railroads, forests, and mines, and he insists on the municipal building of houses for the occupation of the working poor. Mr. Charles Booth's scheme for the enforced colonization of a stratum of the London poor is characterized as the sending, by society, of three or four million of slaves into captivity for the benefit of the classes of laborers just above them in the ingenious classification of that philanthropist.

"Socialism, New and Old," is well worth the careful perusal of all who wish to be well informed on that subject. The exposition is clear, the argumentation acute, and fair. The conclusions will satisfy, for the time being, all reasonable people who are free from enthusiasm on the one hand and pessimism on the other. The only drawbacks to the book are occasional entanglements in sentence-making and numerous little infelicities of diction which mar a style in the main clear and forceful.

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PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL ECONOMICS Inductively Considered and Practically Applied, with Criticisms on Current Theories. By GEORGE GUNTON, author of "Wealth and Progress." Pp. 447. New York : G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1891.

The key to this book is found in Mr. Gunton's former work, "Wealth and Progress." Having therein developed a law of wages, he now sets himself to work out this law into a complete system of "social" economy. The present work summarizes in the chapter on The Law of Wages the conclusions reached in "Wealth and Progress." According to the author, wages are not a proportional share of the product, but

are a stipulated price, determined by the same law as the prices of commodities. Applied to labor the law is "that wages tend to move towards the cost of furnishing the most expensive portion of the necessary supply of labor-power in any given market;" or, taking account of the standard of life, "the rate of wages in any country, class or industry constantly tends towards the cost of living of the most expensive families, who furnish a necessary part of the supply of labor in that country, class or industry." This is the fundamental principle in the book before us, and whatever of strength or weakness it shows, is ultimately due to the strength or weakness of this proposition. A close examination will show that this principle is wholly superficial. It is undoubtedly true as far as it goes, and is, in so far, of universal application. But it is of no real significance unless it is accompanied by an exposition of all the causes which determine what shall be this "necessary part of the supply of labor" in the given country, class or industry. But here Mr. Gunton fails. He seems to take it for granted that there is always a demand for all laborers, and loses sight of the problems of involuntary idleness, the appropriation of opportunities, the growth of monopolies, and, in fact, all causes which affect the demand for labor. But the law has a practical truth, for it is applicable to all those occupations where labor is organized. Here the vital principle is the limitation of the number of laborers who shall work at the trade in question. In such cases the law is true and of considerable import, but Mr. Gunton fails to make the limitation. Among the great masses of unorganized laborers the hypothesis is insufficient, and consequently all conclusions of a universal character which the author bases upon it must be faulty. This weakness can be traced throughout the entire work. For example, Mr. Gunton concludes with reference to taxation, that it is wholly indifferent to the laborer where taxes are originally imposed ; if they are placed upon the commodities which he consumes they will increase the cost of his living, it is true, but he will demand higher wages or refuse to work. In this

way all taxes are transferred from the laborer to the employer, who is the only one who can pay taxes, since he is the only one who has a surplus above his necessary cost of living. Attractive as this conclusion may be, it is vitiated by reason of the important omissions above noted. Owing to the same cause, other conclusions of the author are inadequate, such as those relating to the necessary functions of government, the functions and regulation of money, and in general the entire theory of distribution.

Notwithstanding this imperfection, the work shows abundance of keen observation and shrewd criticism, and it makes at least one important contribution to economic science in showing the relations between machinery and the consumption of wealth by the masses. It is here that Mr. Gunton works out a suggestive outline of economic history and of corresponding economic thought. Political economy was written first from the standpoint of the land-owning class, then from that of the manufacturer and merchant; but now that serfs have become wage-receivers, large factories have arisen which require "a more extensive market for their success than any possible increase in the consumption of wealth by the upper and middle classes could furnish," and, "therefore, it is in the needs of the masses that the economics of the future must be studied and statesmanship determined." In developing this side of economic doctrine, the author may rightly claim that "instead of a system of '*commodity*' economics, which justifies human degradation as a means of cheapening wealth, we have a system of *social* economics which shows that the most effective means of promoting the industrial welfare of society on a strictly equitable basis must be sought in influences which develop the wants and elevate the character of the masses." No other American has shown so successfully the economic justification of all legitimate and practicable efforts for elevating the condition of the wage-receiving classes. Herein his book will stand criticism, and will furnish a starting-point for a well-rounded system of economics.

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